

THE BEDOUIN OF THE DESERT 27

main away from regions where guests are likely to be⁵⁷⁴ numerous. The road between Hofuf, the capital of [31] Hasa, and Oqair, its nearest port, affords excellent pasturage for goats and camels, and water is easily available for watering the stock. The traveler, however, will probably not see so much as one tent in that whole region. Caravans are coming and going continually, and the poor Bedouin cannot possibly entertain so many. Stern necessity compels him to go where the demands on his very slender resources will be smaller.

But the finest hospitality that I have ever enjoyed has been at the hands of the Bedouins. Ten years ago in the vicinity of Kuwait we saw a good deal of them, for there is always a fringe of Bedouin tents surrounding that city. The American missionaries were far from welcome in [60] the town. A rival Turkish doctor had been imported by a local Mohammedan society and stocked with medicines and instruments so the poor might be treated free and every excuse for visiting the missionary's establishment removed. But there was no trace of hostility among the Bedouins and it was a great pleasure to visit their tents. We had a number of patients there and had to visit them often. When the dressings and treatments were finished, we stayed and visited together. There were questions about America, and the way to come from there to Arabia, and I in my turn learned a great deal about them and their utterly poverty-stricken lives. The way in which the medical missionary was admitted to the circle as one of the family is perhaps the most prized memory that twelve years' experience affords.

In the calendar of the desert the real red letter days⁵⁷ are those when a wedding in the sheikh's family or some⁵⁷⁴ other event is the occasion for a great feast. Every

THE ARAB AT HOME

422 "Well," I persisted, "the matter does not seem to
425 trouble you a great deal."

"No indeed," with an even broader grin if that were possible. "It does not trouble me at all. Just as soon as I get out of here, I will go and steal somebody else's. Who knows? Perhaps I may have more than I had before."

425 The tribal fights that keep the country in a continual
518 state of turmoil are little more than glorified raids for the sake of plunder. They intensify the poverty of the community, for legitimate trade is handicapped, and this irregular exchange of goods cannot in the nature of the case benefit the whole society, however much it may temporarily enrich individuals. But life without the excitement of these raids seems to the desert nomad a tame and a stale thing, hardly worth living. On the other
422 hand, personal property, such as is kept in tents, is as sacredly individual as it is with us, and its theft is keenly
485 resented. The conception that every man's home is his
609 castle is one of the most fundamental ideas of the Arab, and when the crew of a gunboat many years ago attempted to search the inner quarters of a house in Dibai for firearms, the resulting indignation was so intense that foreigners found themselves unable to enter that district for
422 nearly ten years. The household belongings that the Bedouin keeps in his tent may be poor things but they are very much his own.

181 This life of the desert, with its poverty and hardships and its primitive economic conditions, has nevertheless so worked its charm on the Bedouin nomad that he longs for nothing else. The Bedouin with his intense individualism seems particularly adapted to the desert. He
000 loves its vast distances and its solitude. Anything less

Saudi Arabia M51
Bedouin M34

THE OASIS COMMUNITY

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of a spiritual guide or pastor, much less for the functions of a priest. 713

There is a small group of land-owners and merchants (the same individual is frequently both), who constitute a wealthy upper class which has great power in the community. They form a sort of unofficial cabinet to advise the ruler, and not a great deal happens without their knowledge and approval. However, they are not sheikhs, and sometimes when a powerful governor presides over a community, this rich men's cabinet exercises surprisingly little influence over him. The ruler and his family form what might be termed a class by themselves. Frequently they are strangers more or less directly derived from some Bedouin tribe and far less traveled and sophisticated than many of their rich subjects. They are, however, none the less effective rulers for that. But the whole subject of the workings of Arab government is one that we must reserve for a later chapter. 565

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Desert and oasis in Arabia represent two conflicting modes of life and there is little sympathy between them. To the Bedouin the town is a community of masters and slaves with the vast majority slaves. The date gardener works long and hard; moreover he works under another man's direction, and this director of his efforts receives the major part of the proceeds. The artisan, to be sure, is not the slave of any one individual, but he too is cooped up in narrow quarters, and the necessities of his family keep him busy from morning till night working with his hands. Land-owners and merchants the Bedouin envies, but he still pities them their cramped life and close confinement in the town. Why any one who is rich enough to afford a home in the desert should prefer to live in the oasis, is to him an insoluble mystery. 369 565 466 609 369 461 609

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THE ARAB AT HOME

369 But if the Bedouin has a great contempt for the towns-
 565 man, the townsman on his part reciprocates most cor-
 609 dially. He regards the unwashed and unkempt nomad of
 B the desert as little better than a wild beast. Incidentally
 369 he fears the wild religious fanaticism of the despised
 609 tribesmen exceedingly, and not without reason. "Infidel,"
 said one of the Bedouins to a small shopkeeper in
 Hasa who sat comfortably smoking his big waterpipe in
 the door of his shop. "Infidel, shall I break it over your
 head, or smash it here on the ground?" and the shop-
 [6] keeper having indicated a preference for the ground, the
 [193] fanatical Wahabi, to whom tobacco is the very essence of
 sin and uncleanness, smashed the waterpipe to pieces on
 the floor. A waterpipe is a quite expensive affair, being
 [274] an ornamented glass jar of about a quart capacity. Those
 accustomed to their use insist that in no other way can
 tobacco be properly smoked. The time was when the in-
 habitants of the oasis towns were more religious than the
 Bedouins, but that time is past, and now the Bedouin in
 his religious zeal looks on them as next to infidels.
 "Those are the men," the city dweller will explain with
 great scorn, "who think they are competent to instruct us
 in matters of religion. They do not know the simplest
 prayers. Their heads are so full of lice that room could
 scarcely be found for more. Their clothes never get
 washed. Their women go about unveiled. They are
 S nothing but wild animals."

369 The underlying changes that have brought about this
 463 transformation from desert conditions to those of the
 423 oasis are two. There is a division of labor, and a certain
 B differentiation into sections and cliques is inevitable on ac-
 369 count of that, but a far more significant thing is the fact
 423 that agricultural land in the oasis is held as private prop-
 erty, whereas in the desert land is free as the air.

The Bedouin Problem

The Bedouin cannot live in the desert without maintaining regular contact with the domain of settled society where he trades the surplus products of his economy for essential provisions.

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In the past, the Bedouin have entered the cultivated zone either as conquerors, reducing the peasants to a state of semi-slavery and transforming fertile land into pastures for their herds, or as peaceful guests.¹⁾

The contact of the Bedouin on the outskirts of the settled region is determined by the ability of the government to defend the country and impose restrictive measures on the nomads. Once they accept the idea of compliance with certain conditions, they will soon become semi-sedentary and evolve towards sedentarization.

The substance of Bedouin policy in all the countries of the Middle East is the attempt by the political authorities to subject the nomads to a restrictive code of behavior calculated to protect the settled population, and to organize, facilitate, direct and accelerate their sedentarization.

361
166xThe Crisis in the Bedouin World

In modern times the settlement of the nomads has been regarded as one of the outstanding domestic problems in Arabia and the countries of the Fertile Crescent. The issue has been forced to a head by the crisis which the Bedouin world is under-

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1. Miller, 1931, pp 18-19

BEDOUINS MJ4

In our days sedentarization is the product of the nomad's contact with settled society during the regular periods of his encampment on the outskirts of the cultivated land.

At present, the tribal population of Syria, Iraq, Palestine (Lebanon) and Transjordan (Jordan) is in all stages of transition to a sedentary existence. A. S. Kirkbridge has outlined the various stages that the Transjordan nomad passes on his journey to the settled life of an agriculturalist. With insignificant changes the description of the steps can be made applicable to the process of sedentarization as a whole.

Stages of Sedentarization

1. The true desert Bedouin, raising mainly camels, lives in a world where nature makes cultivation impossible. He migrates in accordance with the existence of water and grazing and supplements his meager income by raiding if conditions permit. He despises the villagers.
2. In spite of the contempt that the Bedouin have for the settled peasants they come to realize that the fellah lives a more comfortable life and enjoys a better diet, compared to the standards of the nomad.
3. The next step is the occupation of cultivable land by the nomadic tribe. Agriculture is practiced only as a

¹ Kirkbridge, 1945, March-April
Kirkbridge does not discuss the Bedouin that come from Arabia subsisting exclusively on camel-breeding. Since practically all Transjordanian nomads have crossed the first stage, the conversion of exclusive camel economy to mixed pastoral economy of sheep and camel-breeding.

Hunting and Warfare

000 At that time I had vainly tried to find the sons of a *sheykh* called Achmed Hafiz, whose name will be known to readers of Homer Davenport's book, "My Quest of the Arab Horse" (New York, 1908). It was from this Achmed Hafiz that Davenport (with whose sister I became well acquainted in California) bought twenty-seven Arab horses in 1906.

344 On my arrival in Aleppo, my first task was to find the *wukil*. The directions led me to a mediæval building near the citadel. The entrance was barred by an enormous iron-studded timber gate. From the courtyard behind it I could hear the well-known guttural accents of Bedouins. I knocked repeatedly without response. Suddenly, however, with creaking hinges, the huge gate flew wide open, and out galloped four horsemen, almost running me down. Squeezed flat against a stone pillar, I looked in amazement after the small cavalcade that disappeared in a cloud of dust round the beetling ramparts of the old Crusader's castle.

● 609 When I turned my eyes to the entrance again, I saw standing before me in the doorway a Bedouin unusually big for his race, a good six feet high, who scrutinized me critically without "batting an eyelid" and without responding to my greeting. At length he coolly laid an arm round my shoulders and, in no very amiable manner, pulled me within, while with his other arm he gave a tug at a long rusty chain, which effectively closed the gate.

351 My eyes fell on a caravanserai that made me fancy
231 myself back in the days of the Caliphs. The yard was not exactly tidy, but it looked better than many a khan

Ali, the "Protector"

I had seen in Istambul and Baghdad. Scattered about 351
higgeldy-piggeldy, in peaceful contentment, was a min- 231
gled assortment of camels, horses, asses, goats, and sheep.
Lazily the lean, shaggy beasts munched the chaff spread
for them on worn-out bast mats and hides. Camel-
drovers, muffled in their frayed cloaks, were squatting
about. Dirty children tumbled boisterously over the
humps of the camels and darted in and out between their
legs, while the animals, with blinking eyes and drooping
ears, patiently put up with the sport. Pigeons continu-
ally fluttered between the court and the old bastions and
turrets, and, sailing low over the battlemented walls,
small vultures circled on motionless wings, croaking
hungrily, with baleful eyes ever on the watch for a meal.

"Whence cometh thou?" the big fellow questioned 609 ●
without any form of introduction and with scant cour-
tesy. I reached into my breast pocket and drew from it
the letter of recommendation, much crumpled and
stained, and with it, inadvertently, a photographic re-
production of Homer Davenport's well-known draw-
ing, "Haleb's Farewell to the Desert." The picture shows
Sheykh Achmed Hafiz and his Bedouin friends wit-
nessing the departure of that celebrated Arab stallion,
Haleb, which the Turkish governor of Syria had given
Davenport as a present. My tall friend grabbed both
letter and picture from my hand and fingered them
clumsily. Suddenly he discovered on the photograph
familiar faces and figures. A thunderbolt could not have
produced greater consternation in the tranquil court-
yard than did the giant's frantic exclamations at this
sudden recognition. His surprise was comical. Stuttering

Hunting and Warfare

●609 with emotion, he tried to communicate not only to me, but to all and sundry, the startling fact that he had discovered his father in the picture. He behaved like a lunatic. He flung his arms about and danced round like a howling dervish. He laughed and cried in one breath and the echoes of his bellowing voice reverberated through the walls till everything seemed to shake; he *could not* calm down. His excitement communicated itself to the animals, and the whole company joined in the uproar. When peace was at last restored, I found myself in the arms of my new friend. Like the protecting wings of the Cherubim, the loose sleeves of his herder's cloak flapped round me, as he hugged me to his chest and kissed me on both cheeks.

"Thou art Davenport's son?" he cried, but it was more a statement than a question. I tried to explain, but in vain! He insisted that I must be Davenport's son, and would hear nothing to the contrary.

Gradually the man grew calmer and mutual understanding became possible. Ali was his name—Ali ibn Achmed Hafiz! And he was the eldest son of the *sheykh* in search of whose family I had come to Aleppo in 1916. What a stroke of luck, that fate should now present to me in the person of the *wukil* of Hajem Pasha the very man I had tried to track down from the time of the World War!

Reminded of my letter, he produced it from the capacious pocket, into which he had crammed it in his excitement, together with a lot of other papers, stuffed these back, assumed an air of importance, and said: "I am Ali, the *wukil* of Hajem Pasha, and Mijhem ibn

Ali, the "Protector"

Meheyd, above all men." He cleared his throat and spat, 609
as if all mankind were dirt. Then he continued: "And
thou art in need of a *rasfiq*?"

"That is so," I replied; "and this letter, which thou
holdest in thy hands, thou wilt transmit immediately to
thy *shaykh*, for it contains a personal message from
Amir Fuaz."

Before I could prevent it, Ali tore open the letter and
began to read aloud:

"Al-illah, by the Adored One! Peace be with thee, dis-
penser of protection! By the Dispensation of Allah, let
this stranger live under thy countenance like a son of
thy father. Befriend him as if he were my own eyes.
Guard and preserve my brother when he lodges with
thee or when thou settest him on his way. I would trust
him to none but thee alone, who walkest with a clear
conscience in the sight of Allah. May the Lord lengthen
thy days, O thou rich in life, and let us evermore dwell
side by side in friendship."

At this point, Ali interrupted his reading with copious 578
supplications for heaven's blessings and rewards on Amir 609
Fuaz. He had never suspected that the young Rueyli
chief could be capable of such gentle virtues and tender
emotions. He was visibly overwhelmed. He raised his
voice and resumed:

"Praise thou the Lord! For He is so magnanimous and
bountiful that He has bestowed upon me, His humble
slave, so rich a gift. He, the Gracious and Merciful,
granted me the wonderful opportunity of relieving thy
ally and our brother, Barjas ibn Hedeib, of seventy
mares."

Hunting and Warfare

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578 Ali jumped as if stung by a tarantula. In place of the previous outpouring of blessings there now issued from his lips a flood of wild imprecations and sulphurous curses on the head of the Amir. Again he raged like a madman. His outbreak was ably seconded by the other Bedouins, and once more bedlam broke loose in the courtyard, men and animals creating pandemonium. In their insensate fury, the men began to belabour the excited and frightened sheep, asses, and goats with their flexible camel-sticks, as if they had the hated Rueyli chief himself under their hands. Even I, the innocent cause of this outburst of frenzy, became the target of Ali's choicest vituperation. How could I associate myself with such a notorious cutthroat and common bandit? It took a considerable space of time for Ali to calm down again—and with him the whole audience—and, in a voice still agitated, he read out the remainder of the letter:

"May the Lord take pity on thy saddened thoughts and may cheerful reflection on the Inevitable console thee and tranquilize thy soul." (I couldn't help laughing out loud at this; whereupon Ali scowled at me most ungraciously. "All is fleeting, but all is also preordained by Allah. May the corpse of him who casts doubt on the bravery of my horsemen be flung aside without burial. God's infallible acts are manifest, and in the light of these events, which were inevitable, thou shouldst acknowledge the truth of my words." ("Aha!" I said to myself. "What a brilliant idea! To hold Allah responsible for the theft of seventy mares!") "Allah bless my beautiful and virtuous kinswoman who is in the keeping of thy brother." (Tarfa, a sister of Amir Fuaz.) "May

Ali, the "Protector"

the position of the heavenly bodies be of better augury ⁶⁰⁹
for thee! God is omnipotent!" ₅₇₈

Ali, sunk in meditation, seemed disturbed by a thousand conflicting thoughts. At length, however, he dutifully kissed the face and back of this typical example of Bedouin diplomacy. Secretly, I had to admire the respect ^[577] accorded in Arabia even to one's deadly enemy.

Ali grasped my hand. Anger still lingered in his eyes, but his voice sounded pleasant enough as he said to me: "This letter, my friend, is just about as good as a recommendation from Iblis" (the devil), and with a grimace of contempt he tossed it on the fire. I was only just in time to snatch the already singed sheet of paper from the flames; but, as a matter of fact, neither Ali nor I ever had the courage to present the letter to either of the Fid'an chiefs.

To my great delight, Ali offered himself as my *rafiq* for the journey to the Jesirah (Mesopotamia). Within two days he had ferreted out a second-hand Ford car to carry us to the Euphrates.

XXIV

With the Tai' and Shammar Bedouins

101 LUCK FAVOURED US in eluding the vigilance of the
361 French on our second attempt to reach the grazing
233 grounds of the Tai' Bedouins under their *sheykh*, Mu-
hamed Abd-er-Rachman at-Tai'.

His great camp spread out in a verdant valley, threaded by a long chain of rain pools. The snow-covered mountain ranges of Kurdistan, stretching beyond the Turkish frontier, formed a picturesque background. Camels and great flocks of sheep grazed over the desert, which recent rains had turned into rich pasture. Dotted about in groups were the black tents of the Bedouins. A horseman came to meet us. A foal, so it seemed in the distance, pranced round its mother, but as the rider drew nearer, we saw that the playful creature was a tame gazelle. The Bedouin rode a magnificent mare, that pranced on her feet like a dancer.

574 "Where is the abode of our host who will receive us?"
609 I enquired. He pointed to the black outline of the largest tent, which showed from behind a ridge some distance away.

"Ha-wallah—by God—there dwells the Generous One!" He looked us over for a moment, then greeting us curtly, turned his horse and galloped away, the gazelle after him.

With the Tai' and Shammar Bedouins

As we neared the large tent, the merry "ringing" of the coffee mortar bade us welcome. Malla Sulumeh, scribe to Sheykh Tai', conducted us within.

A considerable number of tribesmen were gathered in the roomy tent. As usual, the favourite falcon of the *sheykh* stood perched on a camel-saddle.

A slave removed the bird and placed cushions on the saddle for us. The coffee-cook poked apart the pieces of glowing desert roots on the hearth and poured between them dried camel dung from a fold of his cloak. He blew energetically on the hard nuggets, the size of walnuts, until small bright flames commenced to dance all over them. Then a large, beaked can was placed on the glow and it was not long before the coffee-water boiled and bubbled over. "Revive thy spirit!" said the every-ready cup-bearer as he offered me the aromatic cup.

Previously he had, in accordance with Bedouin practice, conscientiously wiped out every cup with the sleeve of his old shirt. Adroitly he held in his other hand four small china cups without handles, like so many eggs in a nest, and jingled them lightly one against the other.

The coffee made the round. The favoured guests, whom the Negro served first (unhappily I belonged to them) were the victims of especial politeness; before pouring the coffee, he spat first into the cup and wiped it dry with his shirt sleeve. Three times had I to endure this rite at the hands of the punctilious coffee-priest, who waited on us with the utmost solemnity on each occasion. Only then might I waggle the cup between my finger-tips in token of thanks and satisfaction and hand it back to him.

Hunting and Warfare

000 man back to Aleppo, with his "wild ostrich", happy and contented.

157 Here, too, rain had fallen and transfigured the arid, yellow wastes into lush green meadows. From the small band of Shammar, our guide borrowed riding-camels for our further journey, and we reached the camp of Mishal ibn Faris on the following day. Of Mishal the Arabs say that "no cloud can be compared with him for generosity." I, too, must say that I have seldom met so unselfish and kind-hearted a man.

Outside his large tent we drew up and dismounted. How many guest fires must have been lighted under this smoke-blackened roof, which had sheltered three generations!

574 The elderly *shaykh* stood on the threshold and bade
 ●609 me welcome with the sacred formula of the wilderness,
 [576] the assurance of peace, "Salam Alayk."

I responded in the manner of the desert: "God keep thee well." Then, Mishal ibn Faris took with his own hand the headstall from my mare and hung it on the main post of his tent. He had wanted to know me, he said, as soon as he had heard that a stranger, who loved Arab horses, was visiting the 'Tai'.

I thanked him for his pleasant and friendly invitation. In his way of addressing me there was more than ordinary politeness. From now on, whether with them in person, or far away, I had the freedom of his tribe.

157 Mishal ibn Faris, the great Shammar *shaykh*, esteemed
 554 from one end of the desert to the other for his staunch righteousness, had a peaceful and moderating influence on Bedouin politics, both in Mesopotamia and Syria. "A

THE LAND OF THE FREE

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migrated from Central Arabia. Before Ibn Hadhdhal, the greatest shaikh in the Syrian desert had been Ibn Jesham, who now lives in poverty on the Lower Euphrates. 622

It was, indeed, related that an Arab petitioner had once accosted His Majesty King Abdul Aziz ibn Saud by the title of Chief of the Arabs, but that the latter had protested: "I take refuge with God, my son! The Chief of the Arabs is Ibn Hadhdhal." With less than 200 years of rule to their credit, the Sauds were a new family to the Arabs. 81

When this story was repeated to Ibn Hadhdhal, he interrupted the narrator to object: "I take refuge with God, my son!" said the old chieftain. "The chief of the Arabs is Ibn Jesham." Such was the modest chivalry of these old chiefs, although all of them were at war with one another.

From Ibn Hadhdhal I obtained a letter to Al Nuri ibn Shaalan, chief of the Ruwallah. A retainer of Fahad's, Burjas al Dhafiri, was detailed to accompany us on our journey, to save us from molestation by the Amarat. He could not, of course, protect us from raiders from other tribes. Burjas came from the Dhafir tribe, not the Amarat. He had been obliged to flee from his relatives owing to a blood feud, and had taken refuge with Ibn Hadhdhal, whose trusted retainer he had become. Burjas was so short-sighted that he was almost blind, but he knew the desert perfectly for hundreds of miles. As we rode along, he would cross-question us as to what we could see. "To the north-west, there should soon appear two low round hills each surmounted by a heap of stones, like a woman's breasts." "Can you see on the south a tall grey peak? It is Feridat al Wa'ar." 122 628 485

Burjas, half-blind, carried 200,000 square miles of desert in his mind's eye, and could estimate when every distant landmark would come into view. 485

We made for the water-holes at Al Molussi, in the hope of hearing news of Ibn Shaalan. The water-holes were in a narrow valley at the foot of a rocky cliff. There was nobody camped on the water. We stopped to drink, when suddenly we were startled by a voice calling: "What are you, O camel riders?" 609

High above us on the rocky cliff face sat three men, each holding a rifle. Burjas argued with them without revealing our identity,

485 for we were at their mercy had they proved to be hostile. They
609 eventually identified themselves as Sba'a, a tribe friendly to the
Amarat. They told us that they were picketing the well to watch
for a raiding party led by Sultan al Tayyar—Sultan the Flier—of
which they had received warning. They advised us to be on the
look-out.

609 It was about ten o'clock one morning when we topped a low
desert ridge and came in sight of a wide grassy hollow thickly
covered with black bedouin tents, in the middle of which the
huge tent of the shaikh was plainly visible. It was not without
trepidation that we tapped our camels into their briskest walk,
and closed in on one another, flank touching flank and neck to
neck, so as to make a dignified entry. Perhaps because every man
in the desert went with his life in his hands, and anyone he met
might be an enemy, the bedouins were always careful to make a
609 dignified and reserved arrival at a strange camp. We dismounted,
576 hobbled our camels and, wrapping our cloaks around us, advanced
at a stately walk side by side. A negro slave who was making
coffee unrolled a rug for us to sit on. A few men sitting in the tent
returned our salutation, and we sat down in silence.

609 Perhaps ten minutes elapsed before Al Nuri himself entered,
a fierce, glowering face, with a hawk-like nose and bright,
piercing eyes. He sat down without a word of welcome and
another long silence ensued. At a scarcely perceptible gesture
from the old man, his clerk rolled a cigarette and placed it between
his fingers. A slave stepped forward quickly with a glowing ember
in a tongs to light it. The shaikh puffed in silence and glowered
round. Burjas rose and crossed the tent, and laid our letter of
introduction before him. "Fahad sends you his greetings," he
said. But the chief only grunted, and the letter remained lying in
front of him on the ground. Another ten minutes of silence ensued.
Then the shaikh beckoned his clerk to read the letter to him, for
he could neither read nor write. Now at last, I thought, his
churlish manners will change, for I knew what was in the letter.

The secretary read in a low voice in the shaikh's ear. When it
was finished, the latter gave a grunt and relapsed once more into
silence and cigarette smoke. The tension was increasing and I
began to grow angry. The remainder of our journey was across

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desert country, full of tribes which recognized the authority of no government. Without the assistance of this old man, it might be impossible to proceed. Even so, I felt that I could with dignity wait no longer, and I signalled to my two companions. We rose, walked out of the tent to our camels, and began to adjust the saddles and prepare to mount. But a slave ran out to us and, pulling Ibn Hadhdhal's man by the sleeve, he led him back to the tent. Apparently he persuaded the shaikh that we were harmless, for we were invited back, and Al Nuri himself so far unbent as to say, "You are welcome! We are always glad to see the English!" This appeared to use up his available conversation, and he soon afterwards disappeared. We spent the rest of the day strolling about, talking to the slaves and tribesmen, or sitting amongst bales of cloth and tobacco in the tiny tent of an itinerant merchant from the Iraq desert oasis of Kubaisa.

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Al Nuri was a tremendous personality who maintained despotic control over his tribe. His authority was notorious, and the Ruwallah were frequently laughed at by other tribes for their tame submission to such autocracy. One such story related how a man of the tribe, summoned in the tomb by the recording angels to give an account of his actions on earth, replied, "I am only a dead Ruweili, and all claims are settled by Ibn Shaalan." But although a redoubtable champion in action (he had murdered his elder brother in order to make himself shaikh of the tribe), he did not, like most Arabs, possess the gift of conversation.

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The authority which Ibn Shaalan wielded over the Ruwallah was probably unique amongst bedouins, and was due to personal fear of this formidable old man. The Arab tribesman will accord theoretical and verbal respect to the old families of chiefs, but he will rarely accord them obedience in practice. He constantly opposes and argues against his shaikh. Not infrequently he loses his temper, creates a violent scene and hastens to strike his tent and move away to join the following of some other chief who will treat him with more consideration. Amongst bedouins freedom always tended to degenerate into anarchy—but free they were—freer perhaps than any other race in the world.

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In happy England we have come, for centuries past, to identify our personal liberties with the political independence of our

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| 8 | country. Few people in Britain have realized to what an extent personal and national freedom may be divorced, a point so clearly brought out by Gibbon at the head of this chapter. In Turkish days, the Arabs had no political existence, but as individuals they were as free as any men in the world. Their freedom admittedly owed nothing to Turkish generosity. It was due solely to the inability of the Government to control them.

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609 We slept but one night in the camp of Ibn Shaalan. Next morning we set out once more, having bidden farewell to Burjas, and accompanied by one Qasim ash Shemam, a swarthy villain, detailed to accompany us by Al Nuri. We had scarcely ridden for an hour when we were stopped by two camel riders who overtook us, waving their cloaks to show that they were not hostile, an advisable precaution in those days when the custom of the desert was often to shoot first and ask questions afterwards. They proved to be the nephews of the shaikh, Khalid and Trad ibn Shaalan. In contrast to Al Nuri, they greeted us only with smiles and expressions of welcome, and begged us to spend the rest of the day with them. We protested in vain that we had ridden for only an hour. Half laughing and persuading, half compelling, they turned the heads of our camels, and we soon came upon the big black tent concealed in a small valley in the bare, rocky hills.

There could be no doubt of the warmth of our welcome here. Not only were we obliged to eat and drink almost continuously all day, but Trad pronounced himself dissatisfied with our outfit. It is true that the weather was cold, and the Syrian desert can be bitter when a north wind howls over these barren steppes. First I was obliged to accept some warm gloves, then a magnificent pair of black French boots with pointed toes and buttoning half-way up the calf. I was doubtful for which sex they were originally intended. Sugar, tea, meat, bread and other additions were made to our provisions. It was with difficulty that I resisted the offer of a smart suit of clothes and a better riding camel.

An officer or administrator can rarely obtain a true impression of the people in the district in which he works. To do so, few methods can be better than to travel through the country unknown and poorly dressed, with one or two companions. I was quite unknown to Khalid and Trad, and they were themselves powerful

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and wealthy shaikhs, who had nothing to seek from me. Many ⁴⁸⁵ years later, I was able to acknowledge their kindness and do a very ⁶⁰⁹ little to help them.

Next morning we left the tent of Khalid and Trad, and set out ²²¹ across the desert for the west. Before noon we came across a tribe ³⁰¹ on the move, the vast flocks of camels walking and grazing slowly, the caravan of loaded camels, the shaikhs' women in gaily decorated litters ornamented with red tassels and rows of white shells, the men and boys walking or riding, and the flocks of sheep. Half a mile ahead rode the chief with the advanced guard—three camelmen and two horsemen, one with a hawk on his wrist and a greyhound trotting beside his mare. Our guide, Qasim ash Shemam, must needs trot over to them to gossip. I rode ⁶⁰⁹ parallel to the group twenty or thirty yards away. Suddenly they all looked my way, and a stentorian voice called out, "God damn the English and Ibn Shaalan who shelters them!" The infidel and the stranger were not always welcome, it seemed. It was Fayyadh ibn Jendal, a tribesman of the old school. Ten years later I was to be a close friend of his son and nephew. But the fortune of the day brought us in the evening to Melih al Ga'ga, of a family who had been themselves chiefs of the Ruwallah before the rise of the Shaalan. Here we once more met with the same cordial welcome as from Khalid and Trad. An argument arose between our host and his young son in front of the tent. We could hear an exchange of angry words between them. Qasim later informed us that the boy demanded that his father slaughter a camel for our dinner, whereas the old man said that a whole sheep would suffice. Such are the extravagancies of Arab hospitality, amongst people who themselves live perilously near to the starvation level.

The ensuing days were less eventful. A bitter north-west wind ⁰⁰⁰ howled in our faces. Sand and dust filled the air so thickly that we could see only a few hundred yards. At night we failed to find any tribal camps, and shivered cheerless in the open, beneath the gusts of stinging sand. It was not safe to light a fire for fear of raiding parties.

The camel is capable of covering great distances in twenty-four ⁴⁹² hours, but the idea that the "swift dromedary" skims across the

492 desert like a bird is a European illusion. The bedouin, it is true, will make his camel gallop in a battle. Good riding camels will travel at a jog-trot for considerable distances. But a journey of several hundred miles is chiefly performed at a walk. The camel covers long distances owing to its powers of endurance and the hardihood of its rider. Twenty hours' riding a day at five miles an hour makes a hundred miles, and four hours' rest will often suffice the bedouins.

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These long hours of slow movement are sometimes an intense weariness. The country traversed is often featureless or only slightly undulating plains. The saddle, a wooden framework with a goat-skin and saddle-bag thrown over it, soon rubs sores on the thighs of the beginner.

492 The worst enemy of the inexperienced camel rider is the heat
132 and glare, especially near Iraq or on the shores of the Red Sea, for the uplands of the hinterland are cooler. On our crossing of the Syrian desert, however, we suffered not from the heat but from the cold. Not a tree or a cliff was to be found to break the violence of that cutting north wind, which seemed to howl around us day and night. It blew round our legs as we sat shivering on our camels, it bore away our voices so that we could not hear one another speak. It filled our stale bread and sticky dates with sand when we dismounted to eat.

- 609 Occasionally this dumb and hopeless misery was forgotten in a wild alarm, a glimpse of raiders, a swift flight down little valleys. Once topping a small ridge, we came in sight of a group of camelmens riding towards us at a range of only a few hundred yards. Qasim, who had the raider's eye for country, raced down into a little hollow on our right. Keeping in low ground, we hit our camels sharply and dashed on at top speed. Suddenly our leader pulled up, jumped off, hobbled his camel and ran forward up a low ridge. We followed his example as best we could, and flung ourselves on the ground a few yards from him, loading as we did so. The other party had not seen us, and by raising my head slightly I could see them riding along, unconcernedly talking together. They were within close range now. The gear on their saddles and the fact that they were driving a camel laden with 000 sacks proved that they were not raiders. Qasim suddenly stood up

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Qasim ~~Saddag~~ stood up and shouted, though with his rifle still at the ready, "Wesh entum? (What are you?)" The strangers were thrown into some confusion, but one of them slipped from his camel and advanced on Qasim, also with his rifle ready. Both men had their kerchiefs tied over their faces, so that only their eyes were visible. They advanced towards one another intently and cautiously, like fighting cocks waiting for an opening. "Wa ent wesh ent?" replied the other. ("And you, who are you?") The rest of the other party had couched their camels out of sight in another hollow. They did not look like raiders, but I could not but hold my breath as the two advanced towards one another. Then suddenly the tension relaxed. "Dhana Muslim, sons of Muslim," said the other man—it was the name of the division of Aneizah of which the Ruwallah formed part. Qasim lowered his rifle.

"Are you Ubaid?"

"You're Qasim."

"Keif ent? (How are you?)"

"God bless you."

"May you be well!"

"How are the boys?"

The two ragged, bearded ruffians slowly kissed one another, first on one cheek and then on the other.

"How are you?"

"God keep you."

"May God bless that face."

We stood up. The members of the other party advanced, reassured, dragging their camels by their head-ropes. Such were the daily incidents of desert life. Ten years later the Iraq Petroleum Company's pipeline passed this way, a pumping station had been built in this waste, and English ladies were taking their tea out for a picnic in these stony valleys. That ten years was to see the passing of an era.

Meanwhile Qasim ash Shemam was becoming increasingly domineering and threatening. He regarded us with ill-concealed contempt, as might an old deep-sea fisherman a couple of land-lubbers who had never been to sea before. He repeatedly informed us that he was courting a girl, whom he shortly hoped to

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THE STORY OF THE ARAB LEGION

● 609 marry, but that he required two camels as a present for her father to win his consent. The two camels which I and my servant were riding would be perfectly suitable, he hinted. When we halted for food at midday or in the evening, he would sit down, leaning his elbow on his saddle-bags beside him on the ground, and give his orders. "Hobble that camel, unload that gear." For with all their frank and open manners and their honourable customs, bedouins can be haughty and overbearing when they feel they have the whip-hand. Qasim was a man of limited intelligence, and a venal blackguard.

All the same, he had a sense of humour. Twenty years later, when I was commanding the Arab Legion, Qasim was arrested by the police, doubtless for some heinous crime. "You don't know who I am!" he said when the police came to take him away. "I'm the man who employed Glubb Pasha as a herdsman for my camel!"

361 Altogether it was with satisfaction that one morning we
609 emerged from a narrow valley in the sandy and rocky hills and
712 saw before us the dark green of the palm gardens, the little stone fort and the cluster of houses of the oasis of Kaf. The little fort was owned by Ibn Shaalan and garrisoned by his retainers, under the command of Salih ibn Uthman, a native of the oasis of Jauf. He greeted us with a kindness and consideration which was a pleasant contrast to the company of Qasim ash Shemam. The latter wished to return next day to his tribe, so I paid him off in the evening. But he shouted that the money was not enough and that he would seize our camels. Salih ibn Uthman intervened, and Qasim was persuaded to leave the room. Outside I could hear a loud altercation and a scuffle. Qasim disappeared during the night, taking with him a selection from our gear—my saddle and water-skin and Trad ibn Shaalan's warm gloves.

712 There was an Arab Legion post at Kaf, outside the village in a fortified camp on top of a steep hill. I paid them a visit and had tea with the officers. The evening was spent with Ibn Shaalan's retainers, sitting on the floor round the open hearth in the castle hall. On the glowing embers were ranged a row of coffee-pots. Outside howled that wind which had seemed to us so dreary as it whistled the stinging sand into our faces in the open desert.

THE LAND OF THE FREE

49 B

The old men intervened and said that it was true. They were witnesses that her request had been granted whatever it might be. Ibn Humaid was received as an honoured guest, and the men of Qahtan who had sworn to sacrifice their camels if Ibn Humaid fell into their hands slaughtered them for the marriage feast. 538

The narrator's voice was silent. The hall was in darkness except for the glow of the embers on the hearth. It was past midnight. We rolled ourselves in our sheepskin cloaks, the shaikh's retainers produced pillows and quilts, and in a few minutes we were asleep.

Only when we were saddling up next morning did we discover that Qasim ash Shemam had made off in the night with my saddle. Our hosts professed themselves deeply ashamed and indignant at this treachery, and the invaluable Salih ibn Uthman produced another saddle, on which I rode in some discomfort for the rest of the journey. There remained only 120 miles to Amman. We left the Ruwallah country at Kaf, and, saying farewell to our kind friends, set out for the country of the Beni Sakhr of Trans-Jordan. 609 •

The wind had dropped, the sky was cloudless, the air soft and warm, and range upon range of blue desert hills stretched before and behind us. Three hours' riding brought us to the tent of a shaikh of the Beni Sakhr. Our reception was non-committal, the shaikh, it appeared, being away. We had not been seated long before an old car rattled up, and two Arabs descended from it and entered the tent. Everybody rose, and hastily spread carpets and cushions and welcomed the visitors, who were obviously people of importance. By way of making conversation, I enquired what news there was. One of the visitors replied that as an Englishman I obviously knew more of world events than they. I answered that this was not so in my case at least, for I had spent a month on a camel in the desert, whereas he had just arrived by car from Amman. "Oh, in that case," replied the shaikh, "I will tell you. We hear that the English have broken their promises again, as usual." 493

Such was my first reception by the tribes of Trans-Jordan, with whom I was later on to become so intimate.

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609 I decided, in spite of my reception, to stay for the night in the
576 Beni Sakhr tents, both in the hope that more intimate acquaintance
J would overcome this inauspicious beginning and also to
609 learn more about the Beni Sakhr, a tribe which I had never met
before. The shaikh in the car drove off after lunch, and by the
time we had had dinner and were sitting in a circle round the
fire, the atmosphere had become more cordial.

B
142 Sitting over the coffee-pots, I noticed a long, slim, dark-com-
J plexioned youth, with those fine features which distinguish a
142 certain type of Nejdi nomad, and which were in contrast to the
fairer complexions and thicker build of the Beni Sakhr. When an
opportunity offered, I enquired about his origin, and was told
that he came of the tribe of Mutair. My work in southern Iraq
had brought me into contact with this tribe, though usually as
enemy raiders, and I knew the names of their leaders and the
geography of their country. The boy's face glowed with pleasure
when he heard once more the names of his tribesmen and the
news of their latest raiding exploits. He then told me his story.

B
721 He had joined a large raiding party which had attacked Trans-
J Jordan the year before, and which included several war banners
721 of Mutair. A Beni Sakhr camp had been surprised and over-
whelmed at dawn, and many killed. During the battle, he was
hit by a bullet and fell unconscious from the back of his camel.
When he recovered consciousness, he felt very cold. He looked
around him. It appeared to be shortly after dawn, but the sun
had not risen yet. He was stark naked and lying on the ground,
with corpses and dead animals strewn around. A short way from
where he lay were some black bedouin tents, from which a few
wisps of smoke showed that the occupants were already awake.
Shivering with cold, dazed and weak, he staggered towards the
nearest tent. A man was kneeling in the tent with his back to
him, blowing up the embers of a fire.

B
576 When the wounded boy was some ten paces from the tent, the
man looked round. With a savage cry he sprang to his feet,
snatched a rifle and ran towards him. But in his excitement he
fumbled with the bolt and safety-catch. The naked Mutairi
staggered past him and embraced the tent pole. "I am under the
protection of this house," he cried. The Sakhri threw his rifle

Arab Honour

Chap. VII

12th August, 1933, told the following story of Arab *shima*. He vouched 577 for its truth.

Many years ago, in the time of Muhammad al Rashid, there lived in Buraida a prominent member of the family of Al Ribádi. This man had seen great days and prosperous, but through bad trade had fallen on evil days. Of all his herds of camels, and he had had many, he possessed only one *ndgd* (she-camel). This camel he one day decided to sell, as being old and worn she was no longer of use to him. He therefore asked a passing Shammari Badawin who had come in from the Jabal if he would take the animal away with him and would sell her when in due time. He visited Hail. The money he could hand over at his leisure when next he visited Qasim. The Shammari agreed and took the camel off with him. As luck would have it the journey to Hail was too much for her, she sickened and died on the way. The worthy Shammari decided that as the skin was of some value he would realise something on it for the owner, so he took the camel's skin, salted it, and departed to his own country. Then came the great wars between the Rashid and Sa'ud dynasties and for years the Buraida merchant heard nothing of his camel. He had forgotten all about it, and became an old man, for it was thirty years since the incident took place. One day forty-two beautiful new and strong camels were driven up. One old and two young men were asking the way to his home. It turned out to be the Shammari of thirty years back. He came to give the Buraida merchant his *haq* (right). "Your she-camel died, but her skin enabled me to get a few rials, with ~~these~~ I traded, still I got enough to buy you a new *ndgd*. The new *ndgd* bore a daughter, and these camels you see are all her descendants. They are all yours. I had no opportunity before to bring you what I owed you."

THE LAW OF DAKHÁLA AND WEJH

Dakhála, from the root '*udkhul*—to enter—means the law of 609 entering into a person's protection as a suppliant.

This most honoured and sacred of Arab customs exists all over Arabia and in Iraq, and finds strongest support perhaps among the Badawin, as opposed to the settled tribes and townsmen. An Arab claims *dakhála* by saying, *ana dakhllak* or *ana dakhil 'a l'Allah wa*

Taking Sanctuary

Chap. VII

609 *alaik* (I am your suppliant, I enter upon God's pardon and yours). The person so addressed is bound to protect the suppliant, with his own life if necessary, and is bound always to fight for him, or get him to a place of safety if he is being pursued or is in immediate danger.

HOW DAKHÁLA IS CLAIMED

A man being followed by enemies meets a Badawin girl cutting firewood in the desert, or her mother spinning outside her tent alone, and begs *dakhála*. The girl or her mother is bound to offer protection, and if the danger is near, she will call out for help (*tasih*). Immediately the whole community will rush (*faza'a*) to her aid. The man will be sent to a place of safety. He will not be surrendered.*

[628] A man may enter the house of the brother of a man he has just killed. If he demands *dakhála* he is safe for three days, after that time he must say where he wants to go, and he will be seen safely to his destination. This done, the brother of the man he has killed is free to resume his just blood feud.

HOW DAKHÁLA WORKS

A man is chased for a crime, he rushes into a tent (or house) and begs *dakhála*. The owner of the tent is bound not only to grant sanctuary, but, after feeding the visitor and clothing him, must see him safely to the house, tent or tribe where the suppliant thinks he will be safe. After that the protector's responsibility ends.

So strict is the law of *dakhála* among the Badawin that a man carrying the "cane" (marked with his *wasm*) of a shaikh with whom he has taken sanctuary, may safely travel through the length and breadth of a tribe's territory, even though there may be persons there who have a blood feud with him.

609 178 In countries like modern Sa'udi Arabia, and in the new Iraq where the authorities, following the Persian example, are unfortunately, and I think mistakenly, trying to break down tribal customs, the practice of *dakhála* is unpopular with those who rule, and the police con-

* Jaal the Kenite of Bible fame broke the law of *dakhála* when she slew the sleeping Sisera, who clearly believed himself safe in her tent. She also broke all laws of hospitality, as Sisera had come to her tent and partaken of her food.

Western v. Tribal Custom

Chap. VII

stantly find themselves thwarted by it. This is a pity, for if properly understood there is nothing shameful or anti-social in the system. It would be wiser for the law to recognise its existence and make use of it and of other time-honoured Arab customs. 609 178

In 1933 my friend, Shaikh Lafi ibn Ma'allath of the Mutair (Brah) tribe, a faithful warrior and servant of Bin Sa'ud, was forced to flee to Iraq, because a man pursued by Bin Sa'ud's blockade-police took refuge in his tent, and invoked the law of *dakhla*. When the police threatened to search for the fugitive the stout-hearted shaikh signalled to his followers and fellow tent-dwellers to close around, and said he would resist the man's arrest by force of arms if necessary. Baulked of their prey the police (all townsmen) went away angry and sullen, and reported the incident to Ibn Jiluwi, their master. Lafi, feeling that he had got a breathing-space, and knowing that he would never be forgiven, fled across the border with his cousins, relatives, women, children, thirty tents in all, never to come back. Had the police bided their time, three days, they could probably have followed and made an arrest. Instead, they drove a faithful and loyal servant of the King into exile. 641

Cases of a similar nature are legion, and do almost more than anything else to promote bad feeling between the tribal elements of Arabia and the local governments.

The root trouble is, of course, the desire of upstart kings and princes, eager to ape the West, to break down all tribal systems, because they think these mark a backward state of society.

Akin to *dakhla* is the conception of *wejh* or *tisyar*. This literally means "face". *Be wejh fulan* (lit. "In So-and-So's face") means under the protection or safe conduct of So-and-So, and is a phrase very commonly heard in the desert. The penalties for outraging a person's *dakhla*, *wejh* or *tisyar* (as the Iraq tribesmen call *wejh*) are very severe indeed; a heavy fine is exacted from any person purposely defying the custom. This fine is called *hashm* or "honour money" [628] in Iraq. A man surrendering to the police another who has claimed *dakhla* will be relentlessly pursued by the suppliant's relations and will be slain unless he compounds the case by paying *hashm* to the tribe.

The following anecdote of how a British officer was saved by

Brave Women

Chap. VII

577 seeking sanctuary with Hasan Agha and his womenfolk near Samawa on the Euphrates, provides a good illustration of the working of *dakhla*.

609 In 1919 Hasan Agha, a married man with family, was a small farmer living a little way above the iron railway bridge at Samawa. He dealt with the tribes of Rumaitha, bought their grain and knew everyone in that region. He was a popular figure and the English esteemed him highly as a good farmer and one interested in his lands. Then came the Arab revolt of 1920-21. It broke out like a lightning flash first in Rumaitha, and the tribes of that place opened the ball by rushing the Political Officer's Headquarters and releasing prisoners from gaol. It so happened that a young British officer in civil employ was away from Rumaitha the day the storm broke. He had been riding out towards the south-west in the direction of the Euphrates and knew nothing of what had taken place, but as he neared Rumaitha again he heard shots, and saw some horsemen detach themselves from the town and come rapidly towards him. At first he thought them friends, but as they came galloping towards him shouting and firing as they rode, he realised that something serious was amiss. He turned south again to make for Samawa. The horsemen, seeing his intention, gave tongue, and the young Englishman set spurs to his horse. He gained on his pursuers, but owing to floods near the railway bridge upstream of Samawa, was forced to turn in a south-westerly direction. He bethought him of Hasan Agha's farm near the river and reached it a bare couple of miles ahead of his pursuers. Arriving at the large semicircular *muthif* built of mats and reeds that was Hasan Agha's house, he called out his name several times. For a while there was no reply, then out came a woman who said her husband, Hasan, was away, and enquired what the caller wanted. The young Englishman, exhausted with his hard ride, pointed to the oncoming horsemen, and begged shelter and protection. The woman called out her two daughters and told them quickly to join her in her women's quarters and bring out their *'abbas*. The women took the Englishman into their innermost room and covered him with his hostess's own cloak. She herself and her two daughters sat in front of him sewing. Suddenly the horsemen rode up, and in loud voices asked for Hasan Agha. Getting no response the leader dismounted, and putting his head in the women's room

A Narrow Escape

Chap. VII

demanding that the Englishman, whom they had seen entering, should be surrendered. They had caught his horse, they said, as it galloped away, so it was clear he was hiding here. The lady pretended to be indignant at her privacy being invaded, and set up screams and cries, calling upon God to bear witness that So-and-So had violated lonely women's private quarters with evil intent. She added that her husband, Hasan Agha, would have something to say when he returned. The two daughters joined their mother's outcry, and so bitter were the women's words, and so fierce their demeanour, that the horsemen finally abandoned the search. They drew off, baffled, but kept guard at some distance. Seeing the danger temporarily over, the women gave the exhausted Englishman tea and hot milk. While one stood on guard by the entrance of the hut, the others produced women's garments and made him put them on.

At last the sun set, and the master of the house returned. He had been up to Najaf in his small *balam*, and brought back great and serious news. The whole countryside of the Euphrates was up, and the tribes were fighting the *hukmah* (government). Rumaitha, he said, had been captured, Samawa was invested and the fall of Hilla, Kufa and Diwaniyah would soon follow. He then learned, with astonishment, of the young Englishman's presence, and praised the conduct of the brave women. To the young man he promised safety, but said he could arrange his escape only under cover of darkness. Hiding him once more in a better place than before, he went out to the horsemen and rated them soundly for having frightened and ill-treated his women. In vain they explained, in vain they argued. Hasan played the outraged husband and father whom nothing would appease. That night he filled his boat with lucerne grass and placing the disguised Englishman in the bow he seated himself at the stern, and slipped down stream. Three hours later, just below the great Samawa bridge, they were challenged in English, and narrowly escaped being shot. Drawing in to the bank, Hasan made himself and his companion known to the British picket, and after handing over his charge left again silently. The Englishman was saved. For this gallant act I was later privileged, as Political Officer to the Middle Euphrates, to secure from Government a substantial reward for Hasan Agha and his wives, which included frocks for the women and a water-pumping

Arab Chivalry

Chap. VII

- 609 machine for Hasan. He did not possess it long, for when full independence was granted to Iraq, the leaders of the new Arab Government deprived Hasan Agha of his pump.

(NOTE.—The above story was told me in this form by Hasan Agha himself. It differs very considerably from the account published in *Blackwood's Magazine* of August 1921 by the chief actor in the drama.)

Before closing this chapter I must quote one more example of Arab chivalry. It was told me on 10th March, 1937, by Shaikh 'Ali al Khalifah al Subah and next day confirmed by the hero of it, ibn Khazar himself, who later became a great friend of mine.

622
628
577 About thirty years before, when 'Abdul Muhsin ibn Khazar, Shaikh of the Bani Khalid, was a young man, he was famed far and wide as a raider. Many and great were his deeds of endurance and bravery. One day he carried out a distant foray against the U'taiba, in course of which he killed a well-known shaikh, galloping after him and single-handed shooting him in the back with his carbine. On his return from the raid he was sitting round his camp-fire regaling his friends with the story when there entered the son of the Shaikh of the Za'ab tribe (*bani 'dm* to the 'Adwan). He must be told the story over again, and coming to the part of how he dropped the 'Utaiba leader from his horse with one flying shot, 'Abdul Muhsin pointed his weapon at the Za'ab lad and fired. He never dreamed that his carbine was loaded as it unfortunately was. The son of the Za'ab Shaikh was killed.

In horror, he was for a time at a loss what to do. His Bani Khalid people tried to persuade him to report that the youth had been killed in a nearby raid, but ibn Khazar held that this would be contrary to Arab honour. He rode off to the boy's father and told him exactly what had happened. At the end of his recital he loaded his carbine handed it to the Shaikh of the Za'ab and begged him to avenge his son's blood. The shaikh generously refused. Not to be outdone, 'Abdul Muhsin declared that he would be a second son to the bereaved father till he died. He kept his word, giving his adopted father half of his sheep and camels, half of any loot (*chessib*) which he ever gained in a raid, and half of any presents that he ever received from ibn Sa'ud or the Shaikhs of Bahrain. He continued to do this until the old man died.

Limitation of Sanctuary

Chap. VII

NOTE ON DAKHÁLA

In discussing the law of *dakhála* with Shaikh Thuwairan abu Sifra, head of the Rukhman section of the Mutair on 6.2.39, the latter told me that in the matter of *dakhála*, the Mutair, Qahtan and 'Utaiba granted *dakhála* to any member of their own tribe who asked for it, for a set period of twelve months, and the *dakhil* could wander about with entire safety in his particular tribe for this period and could go anywhere without danger of molestation provided he did not go beyond the confines of the tribal *dirah*. 609 171

The 'Ajman, he said, had the same rule, but the *dakhil* must not leave the vicinity of the tents or tent of the person affording him *dakhála* and should camp alongside him as his *qasir* or tent neighbour, thus getting double protection.

The Shammar, Dhafir, Harb and 'Awazim tribes on the other hand granted *dakhála* only for three days and three nights, and then were obliged to help the *dakhil* make good his escape to a safe place or person indicated by himself. This rule, he said, was also followed by nearly all the riverain tribes in Iraq.

He asserted that a woman had no *wejh*, and so could not grant *dakhála* [562] to any person unless her husband was absent from his tents. In such circumstances she could give refuge to a man making his *dakhála* to her.

Lastly he told me that a Mutairi breaking another Mutairi's *dakhála* (i.e. harming his *dakhil* in any way) entitled the man giving the *dakhála* to raid the aggressor's tents seven times, kill as many men as he could of the aggressor's family, and kill as many camels as he could with full impunity and with no ill consequences to himself. (*Illu il haq i sabbahu saba marrat*.) 628 609

A point to note here is that he may not carry off camels, but must kill them, lest he be accused of cupidity when just vengeance is what he seeks.

Town Morals

Chap. XIII

further east and south, very strict. The whole desert world will ^B831
certainly agree that the shaikhs of the tribes of Najd proper are far ^B22
superior in moral behaviour to their brothers of Iraq and Syria, and
for that matter of the north generally, and they never cease to deplore ^B
and at the same time boast of the fact. This is of course all good ^B609
propaganda for the Ruler of Sa'udi Arabia and for Wahhabi-ism,
and justifies up to the hilt His Majesty King 'Abdul 'Aziz's policy of
keeping strangers as far as possible out of his country, and in particular
out of Central Arabia.

Undoubtedly the proximity to Damascus and Baghdad of the ^B831
Northern 'Anizah and Shammar is slowly but surely demoralising ^B369
the leaders, though not yet the rank and file. The coming of the
motor car is also hastening the process. To their great credit Al
Hadhal (Amarat) and notably their great chief Shaikh Mahruth have
and are still keeping themselves free from the poison of the towns,
but how long they will keep themselves and their people uncon-
taminated by the great cities is a question.

MORALITY IN THE TOWNS

Mecca is recognised as one of the most immoral towns in Arabia. ^B369
If one can believe the Badawin, every form of foul vice prevails there. ^K
In Kuwait for a woman to lapse and be found out, usually means ^B684
death. Her brothers or cousins are her executioners. The husband is
more tolerant.

If an unmarried girl goes astray, her lapse is punishable with stoning
or "walling up" in a small room, where only one coffee-cup of water
and a few dates are given her through a hole in the ceiling per day.
If she survives this starvation treatment for forty days, God is sup-
posed to have intervened and she is set free.

A man may without much disgrace indulge in strange women, ^K
provided they are public ones, and work for hire. The condition is ^B548
that he behave so discreetly as not to let the world know. This is
most important.

Nice Arab women have on occasion suggested to me that in the
absence of my family in England it would be permissible if I
occasionally patronised a gay lady's establishment of good standing,

CHAPTER XXII

'Ajman Talks and Tales

(from my original Diaries)

PHILBY'S "EMPTY QUARTER"

While camped alongside of a large 'Ajman camp, consisting of details 114 of the Musrah, Mahfudh and Sulaiman sections, on 7th November, 1933, some 30 miles south of Kuwait, I took the opportunity of discussing with Muhammad bin Hajjaj and Junaifir bin Hawaila, both of the Mahfudh, Philby's journey across the Rub' al Kháli. The world was still talking of his remarkable experiences, and I was curious to know how much the ordinary Badawin knew about it, and especially those northern sections of the 'Ajman who reside in and on the borders of Kuwait.

I found that they knew all about Philby's adventures and to a less extent about Bertram Thomas's journey too.

Both Junaifir and Muhammad al Hajjaj, as well as other greybeards 609 present, declared that they knew Falah abu Ja'sha well, and most of 114 the Murra and 'Ajman companions of Philby mentioned on page 10 of his *Empty Quarter* (I had the book with me, and read out the names). They went further and quite voluntarily recounted some of the more amusing incidents that had befallen Philby. They had got these, they said, from Abu Ja'sha and others. My hearers spoke of Philby as a *rayd*, meaning that he was a "man indeed", and said that he had not stinted his money, when it came to rewarding his party. They said, however, that he was *hamaqi*, hot-tempered, but that as he was a "good Muslim" this would be forgiven him. Junaifir said that he knew the country covered by Philby as far as Bir Fáthil and Maqainama wells, but had never been further south of these places, which as he said was *Dirat al Murra*. He had also been down the Wadi al Dawasir to Sulaiyil and to the more western wells of Ranya, Bisha, Jash and Tathlith.

Philby's Fame

Clap. XXII

609 Muhammad al Hajjaj on the other hand said that he had been as
114 far as Najran *via* Sulaiyil and had married a girl there and resided
with her for some time. The Yam tribe of that region were, he said,
blood brothers of the 'Ajman and Murra, who both had originally
come from Najran. As regards the Rûb' al Khâli, he said he had once
visited the wells of Um al Hadid (near 'Ubar) with the Murra, and
had heard much about the ancient city which was supposed to lie
buried there under the sands. His furthest southern point had been
a spot a little north of Shenna (Philby's furthest south), where the
water was everywhere undrinkable.

Both Muhammad bin Hajjaj and Junaifir called the phantom city
'Ubâr; I tried to make them say it was "Wabâr", but they said theirs
was the correct way of pronouncing its name. They did admit, how-
ever, that "Wabâr" was the way the tribes to the north and round
Hasa pronounced the name, while the Murra, Manasir and Awâmir,
etc., call it "'Ubâr". This is of interest in view of the arguments
which both Philby and Bertram Thomas put forward as to the right
way of spelling the now famous spot.

PHILBY AND THE MILK

000 On 27th April, 1935, I spent a whole day with some of the Mahfudh
section of the 'Ajman camped 30 miles south of Kuwait and west of
the Dhahar ridge. I went over to their widely extended camp which
was situate some 5 miles south of mine and found Mahfudh, 'Arja,
and other details camped together.

Old Junaifir bin Hawaila, Marait his cousin, and Fahad father of
Maneira, wife of Hamad bin Mishwat, were there besides many others.
'Abdullah bin Junaifir gave me lunch (my wife and Zahra were with
me and also Salim al Muzaiyin). It consisted of two sheep and a grand
dish of rice, cooked 'Ajman fashion (i.e. with lots of yellow-looking
melted butter poured over the rice as a gravy). The meat was deli-
ciously tender, and we enjoyed our meal. The owners of some dozen
tents lunched on the remains after we had finished, and while they
were feeding we repaired to Husain abu Juma's tent and his brother
Suwaiyan's, both doughty warriors it was said, who had accom-
panied Sa'ud the King's son to Najran, during the recent Yaman
expedition (1934).

Appendix I

713 *Arms.*—The tribe is particularly well armed with modern rifles, the majority of the men having the Turkish mauser, while the long .303, short .303, German mauser, and Turkish cavalry mauser are to be found. The British short .303 is not popular, it being considered too clumsy for horsemen to carry.

Ammunition appears to be fairly plentiful, but in wartime would be the first supply to fail. No doubt Bin Sa'ud would remedy this by a general issue. The 'Ajman look upon the 'Awazim, the other powerful tribe in Hasa, as their hereditary serfs, but Bin Sa'ud has given the latter the status of an independent tribe. Great enmity exists to-day between the two communities in consequence.

619 The best-known characteristics of the 'Ajman are:

- 186
- (a) Their hot-headedness in attack, which is liable to get them into difficulties.
 - (b) Their loyalty to each other. "Touch one and touch all" may be called their motto.
 - (c) Their remarkable propensity for chattering. They love a joke.

231 The tribe breeds large numbers of camels and a few horses, but practically no sheep.

342 Their tents are usually black or brown, the side pieces and inner partitions having several broad white horizontal stripes in the centre, peculiar to themselves. 'Ajman women cover their faces with a shiny cloth mask of rather unattractive appearance as opposed to the black hanging *burqa* of the Mutair, 'Awazim and Rashedah, which looks well.

291

609 The individuals of the tribe are hospitable to strangers, and the women, like the Mutair, will mix freely with guests, once the preliminary suspicious feelings are removed. They very much dislike their women going into the towns, however.

562

619 The 'Ajman look upon the Dhafir perhaps as their principal enemies, but are also hostile traditionally to Mutair, Shammar, Sbei, and Sahul tribes.

721 In the 1929-30 'Ikhwan rebellion against Bin Sa'ud about half of the 'Ajman allied themselves with the Mutair, half remained staunch.

In the same rebellion the 'Ajman, though camped close to the Kuwait border, carried out several daring and successful long-distance raids to the vicinity of Riyadh and Hufuf, both distant three hundred and fifty miles from their base, proving their well-known talent and capacity for distant forays. In one of these raids the Shaikh of the Al Misra section (ibn 'Uthain) destroyed fourteen of Bin Sa'ud's cars in the Dahana between Riyadh and Hufuf.

641 The 'Ajman, with the collapse of the 'Ikhwan movement, may be said to be sullenly hostile to Bin Sa'ud, and the northern sections would like to

151 followed these tracks for about two hundred yards. He then came back
721 to us and said that fifteen Awamir from the north had raided the Junuba
near the southern coast, lifted three of their camels, watered at a certain
well, and passed this way twelve days before. I myself could not have
been certain that the tracks were even the tracks of camels, they were so
blown by the wind, but he had read the whole story. We had been out
of touch with all Arabs for over a month, but when we met Badu they
confirmed that this raid had taken place exactly as he had said. It is,
however, a mistake to think that all Badu can track. Some of them are
as bad at tracking as they are at guiding, but when you meet a good
tracker or a good guide his skill is uncanny.

181 You might think that a life like this, where to keep alive at all is only
577 just possible, was bound to degenerate into a brutish struggle for survival.
609 But this is not so. These Badu are, it is true, hard and ruthless, avaricious
574 and impatient of restraint, yet no people are so generous. They will give
away their clothes literally from off their backs, and they are brave, loyal to
each other, courteous, patient, and unselfish. I have spent the greater part
of the last five years with them, and I have found it hard indeed to live up
to their standards of decency. Arab hospitality is famous, but I wonder
if you realize what it implies. The Badu do not ask someone to dinner
when they have got something extra or when they feel inclined. One or
two or half a dozen people are travelling past, see an encampment, and
decide to spend the night there, for the traveller in the desert takes a free
meal of anyone he sees. The host and his family are probably almost
starving, yet everything they have is routed out and set before their self-
invited guests, whom they may never have seen before, and if possible
they will slaughter an animal for their dinner. I have often received this
hospitality, and even now it makes me uncomfortable, though my host has
sent me away in the morning feeling that it really was I who had con-
ferred a kindness on him. Of course, another time it is one's host who is
travelling and taking meals off someone else, so it evens up, I suppose.
But it is not that; it is the wonderful, open-hearted, ungrudging way in
which they do it. I am afraid I have always resented the sight of un-
wanted guests when we were short of food.

576 When travelling they always divide up their food before each meal and
264 then draw lots for it, otherwise there is invariably an argument, never
because someone says he has been given too little, but because he main-
tains that he has received too much. Among semi-settled Arabs, where
the strict Badu conventions are not necessarily observed, you soon see how
[271] quickly it is resented when someone always takes the largest piece. Once
576 we reached a well after we had been twenty-four hours without water, yet
no one would drink when we arrived because some of our party had
lingered behind to graze their camels, and they would only drink when
[486] everyone was there. The bond which exists between travelling com-
panions is indeed tremendously strong; it is only this which makes
travelling possible at all. If you are accompanied by a tribesman from a
hostile tribe, you are safe from that tribe while he is with you, and he
577 would fight in your defence even against his own brothers. To betray a
companion is the blackest crime which a Badu can commit; but it goes

401 camels to draw up the water, but the southern
 312 Bedu always lift it by hand. They fasten a
 371 leather bucket, holding about four gallons, to
 415 either end of the rope which runs over the
 461 pulley, so that as one bucket is drawn up full
 233 the other descends empty. Men and women
 draw together on the well-ropes, four or five
 to each rope, singing in chorus as they work.
 We had not been here long before the camel
 herds arrived and the serious work of watering
 began. Great leather troughs supported on
 crowned wooden hoops were set up by each
 family around the well. Soon there was no
 room for more watering parties, and late-
 comers had to wait their turn. The buckets
 rose and fell and were tipped into the trough
 about which the thirsty camels pushed and
 thrust while their calves frolicked around.
 Shouting herdboys, stripped to the waist, ran
 in and out among them, driving away camels
 which did not belong to them, and restraining
 the more impatient of their own. Others
 scratched the hind-quarters of their favourite
 beasts, while they sang them their watering
 songs to induce them to drink deep. When
 they had drunk they were couched nearby, to
 be watered again later in the day, before
 being driven back to pasturage. Round the
 well-mouth women filled their water-skins,
 which then lay swollen and quivering upon
 the ground, guarded from the trampling feet
 of the camels by shrill-voiced little girls, clad
 only in a leather fringe around their waists.
 562 Few of the women were veiled and all joined
 freely in the constant jests and laughter.
 Among them was a tall girl of startling
 beauty. She had come down to the well early
 in the day, carrying a water-skin and accom-
 panied by her young sister. The centre of a
 happy laughing group of lads, she dallied
 here till the evening.
 574 A family of Sa'ar from off the mountains
 291 were camped under an overhanging cliff
 171 nearby, and they bade us join them and drink
 471 coffee. Kinsmen of the Bin Ma'aruf, they yet
 differed from them in their dress and way of
 life. They wore indigo-dyed loincloths and
 wraps around their shoulders, as is the fashion
 among the Southern Bedu, whereas the Bin
 Ma'aruf were clad like the Northern Arabs in
 long white shirts whose pointed sleeves fell
 nearly to the ground. They were returning
 to their homes in Raidat al Sa'ar, a two days'
 journey to the south. Floods of sorghum
 and beans are grown there in a shallow valley,
 guarded by numerous stone-built forts and
 watch-towers, which look out across the deso-
 late rocky plateau. Raidat is seldom visited
 by other Arabs, for it is the very stronghold of
 the Sa'ar, who have an evil reputation for
 treachery.

P. 100 (A)

609 treachery. This is probably a slander, inspired by the constant enmity which characterizes their relations with their neighbours; but they certainly deserve their reputation for godlessness, for they never fast nor pray, declaring that the Prophet gave their forefathers exemption from both.

231 We now sat looking down on the busy
521 scene around the well, and those Arabs who had finished watering strolled over and joined us. They asked us what we thought of their herds, and were soon deep in technicalities with my companions. They spoke of individual camels owned by Arabs four or five hundred miles away, of the different breeds, their milk yields and powers of endurance, of prices in Dhofar, Najran and on the Trucial Coast, of pasturage, and of camels taken in raids on other tribes. We heard details of the recent raid upon the Yam and of how Mabkhaut, nicknamed the Cat, had remained behind to hold up the pursuit and had been killed when his rifle jammed. He had been the greatest raider in the southern desert and his exploits and daring were legendary among the tribes. I had known him well, for he had guided us the year before from Salala to Dhofar. They spoke of raids across the waterless eastern steppes, and among the giant dunes to the north. They told of pursuits and battles in the dark, of ruthless killings, of blood-feuds and murder. They mentioned famous guides, and waterholes and routes across the sands, where the oryx herds still roamed. Meanwhile, a young lad had blown up the embers of the fire and set the long-necked coffee pot to boil. His uncovered hair fell to his naked shoulders and framed an impish laughing face. Our elderly host had roasted the coffee beans and passed them round for us to sniff, before pounding them up in a wooden mortar and putting them in the pot. He flavoured his coffee with crushed ginger as is the custom in the Hadhramaut. He also gave us parched grain and beans to eat; all that he had with him, for on such simple fare do the Bedu travel.

574
000 We lingered with them till the sun was nearly set and then descended past the well, deserted now, except for a bent old woman and two small children, who were loading the last of their water-skins on a young and restive camel. Tomorrow there would be the endless bargaining for camels and arguments with prospective guides, and ahead of us lay all the hardships and difficulties of the desert crossing. But my companions were content, and being happy in the present broke into song as they approached the camp-fires through the dusk.

797 of religious enthusiasm and fanaticism. The
563 Beduin manifested his enthusiasm by declaring
721 that all Moslems were equal before God, and
hence that the Sulubba were equal to "free men,"
i.e. Beduins. Ibn Saud, anxious to increase
his fighting men, backed this idea (in fact he
may have originated it), and raised fighting
forces from the Sulubba and gave them war banners.
The Sulubba took part in a number of war-like
operations, and it was said that, in the mas-
sacres which usually followed a Wahhabi vic-
tory at this time, the Sulubba were the most
cruel and bloodthirsty.

The outbreak of fanaticism, however, died
down from 1925 to 1929, and it is believed that
these Nejd Sulubba have again fallen back to
their original condition.

342 In order to escape unwelcome Beduin guests,
574 the Sulubba live in tiny tents, many of them
563 scarcely larger than a blanket. They show great
269 skill in pitching these tents in the beds of
ravines or behind rocks so as to be invisible
to passers-by. The more important Beduin sheikhs
take pride in pitching a large tent in a pro-
minent place, which conveys not only defiance
of enemies but a distant welcome to guests.
According to Beduin interpretation the Sulubba
reveals his baseness by concealing his camp from
both strangers and guests.

Sulailat

101 These consist of a tribal section, who
563 usually camp with the Amarat branch of the
Anaiza in the Iraqi desert west of the Euphrates.
These people are said to be descended from a
man of the Anaiza tribe, who married a Sulubba

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Phoenician invasion of Syria, the Hyksos invasion of Egypt, and the Hebrew invasion of Palestine are also to be explained by similar antecedent events in Arabia. 167 175

The distribution, grouping, character, and resources of the several tribes are the subject of a subsequent chapter (III); and their relation to particular localities will be stated in the special chapters on the different provinces. 000

It would be beyond the scope of this Handbook to give a detailed description of Bedouin society; and mere generalities about it are of little service. It is perhaps, however, worth while to say something about those features and customs of Bedouin life which most directly affect the reception and entertainment of strangers, and should, therefore, be known before contact. Dictated by similar necessities, these are more or less common to all tribesmen. For all the rest, study of Doughty's *Arabia Deserta* cannot be too strongly recommended. Pretty well everything that needs to be known about Bedouin life can be found there by a patient reader.

Arabia is 'a land of ancient violence'. For this state of things geographical conditions are largely responsible. Only in very few, rare, and narrow districts is it possible to derive from the soil, not a superfluity, entailing wealth, leisure, and consequent civilization, but anything better than hand-to-mouth existence in full sight of starvation. Agriculture is impossible in three-quarters of the total area, and man must live on peripatetic food pastured on such thin and evanescent vegetation that a single family has to keep on the move in order to live. Water again, the prime condition of existence, is to be found for the most part only very occasionally in deep wells, or rain-pools, and this under a subtropical sun. Scanty resources have to be guarded with the most jealous exclusiveness. The regions over which these conditions prevail usually offer few or none of those natural features which serve elsewhere to protect or conceal; and in their vast extent and distribution they impinge so generally on the few fertile districts, or so often encircle these, that hardly any part of Arabia is altogether unaffected by the inevitable social features of life on steppe and desert. 181 511

The most obvious of these features is suspicion. Every man is treated as a potential enemy, till he shows evidence to the contrary. He is kept at a distance until his person or his authority can be recognized. Therefore, in approaching Bedouins, it is as prudent to go slow and give them time as in approaching a sentry in a war-area. Disregard of this advice will result in fight or flight, according to circumstances. While all Bedouins are instinctively suspicious of, and hostile to, the unknown, various 157 609

156 conditions, singly or in combination, cause the attitude of indi-
 609 viduals or groups to differ in degree. As a general rule nomads who
 range habitually on the fringes of alien civilized areas are more
 dangerous to encounter than those habitually withdrawn in the
 wilds. Thus, the northern and western constituents of the great
 Anazah group are less safe to visit than the Shammar. Other contin-
 gent circumstances may make particular groups yet more hostile—
 if, for example, they range near the political frontier of two alien
 powers, as do the eastern Sinaitic groups; or in a difficult moun-
 tainous country, like the Huweitāt and Huteim east and north of
 Akaba; or where shelter and water can be obtained in hidden rocky
 recesses, as among the Beni Sakhr in the southern trans-Jordan
 region; or in insalubrious low-lying tracts such as the Yemen
 Tihāmah, or the southern part of Hasa, or the eastern part of the
 south coast, which account for the evil repute of the Zaranik
 (*Dharāniq*), the Ahl Murrah, and the Qara tribes respectively.

Certain of the inland tribes, however, have reputations as bad or
 worse, and in their case one must look for peculiar causes. The ill
 fame of some groups of the Harb, for example—of one group espe-
 cially, the 'Auf sub-tribe of the Masrūh section—is probably due
 to temptation long put in their way by the pilgrim routes, where
 these pass through a lean region debated between two powers.
 The repute, again, of the Qahtān, reckoned by the popular voice
 the most savage of Bedouin groups, may be accounted for by
 their seclusion and isolation along the northern fringe of the
 impenetrable Southern Desert. It is possible, however, that in both
 these instances report is worse than fact—in the one, because it is
 the well-known pilgrim route that has so often suffered, in the other
 because the northern Bedouins, who chiefly inform European minds,
 [266] know very little about the group in question. It is common talk,
 for example, that some of the Qahtān tribes are cannibal. On
 investigation, this imputation is always passed southward to the
 next group, till it finally fades away into *terra incognita*.

One word of caution, however, must be uttered about such cut-
 and-dried tribal reputations. They have not, in some cases, been
 always the same. The Huteim, for instance, who have a bad name
 for robbery now, used to be esteemed among the most inoffensive of
 nomads—almost on a par with the despised but universally toler-
 ated Sulubba. Some one familiar with the desert talk of the moment
 should always be consulted before the desert itself is entered.

609 The least suspicious and most trustworthy Bedouins are, naturally,
 577 those of the largest and best-knit tribes, especially such as form
 621 part of a federation under the central authority of one of the

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greater Emirs or the Grand Sherif. These tribes are not only controlled to some extent and directed to a common policy, but also have a tradition of self-respect, which ensures the observance of the Bedouin code of hospitality. As Doughty has well said, what stands to a Bedouin for religion is that which men will think of him. Fortunately the fame of a lavish entertainer and a protector of the guest is a condition of nobility among Bedouins; and an appeal against any action inconsistent with this will seldom be disregarded. A properly authorized stranger, whatever his creed, should have little to fear under ordinary circumstances among such tribes as the Shammar, the Ateibah, the Wuld 'Ali, or the Ruweilah.

What, however, does proper authority mean to the ordinary Bedouin? Not the exhibition of any passport or other written document. Letters from the chief Emirs, the Grand Sherif, or other great sheikhs are very valuable if the traveller is passing from one of them to another; but in ninety out of a hundred desert camps he will find no one who can read or will respect paper. The one thing needful is a *rafiq*, i. e. a companion derived from the tribe through whose range one must pass, or from some tribe allied with it or authorized to share its range. If possible, he should be a man of importance whose face will be recognized instantly by the desert men—a race which, like other unlettered races, keeps a long memory for faces and a very wide knowledge of personalities. Still better if he has been attached to the traveller by some well-known chief. The *rafiq* must be kept well in evidence and to the fore in case of such a sudden attack as Shakespear experienced at the hands of the Ateibah in Woshm, when a good deal of harm was done before his *rafiq* could make himself known in the night to the raiders. In territories controlled by a central authority, e. g. a sovereign Emir, a well-known man from the centre may suffice throughout; but even then it is better to take a *rafiq* from tribe to tribe. There are one or two denominations of Arabs who are franked by all tribes and can themselves conduct a traveller anywhere in more or less security; but it is rather less than more. Such are the 'Uqeil (Ageyl)—recognized carriers—and the *Sulubba* (Solubba)—tinkers, medical magicians, hunters—whom no one molests. But travelling with such folk entails the disadvantage that one must go where they wish to go and at their pace; and in disturbed districts near frontiers their aegis is not to be relied upon.

The efficacy of the *rafiq* system is based on the recognition that a particular range or *dira* (*dirah*) appertains to each tribe, and even to each main section of a tribe. Tribes sometimes hold their *diras* in common, as the 'Ajman and Beni Khalid are said to do at present in

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609 northern Haas; and there are certain districts, containing but few
486 wells, where several tribes, each having a right of watering, cross
and recross each other's diras, without committing thereby acts of
trespass, though not without engendering frequent friction. Such,
for example, are the steppe west of Jebel Shammar and that north-
east of the same district towards the lower Euphrates valley.
For the right of crossing a dira the traveller is expected to pay in
money or kind to the chief, who often drives a very hard bargain, but
should not be regarded as levying blackmail. After all, in return
for the payment, he and his tribe concede protection and allow the
traveller to consume some of their very scanty supply of fodder and
621 water. All Arab society is patriarchal. Some one man can answer
for each unit, and among the best Arabs for very large units. The
traveller's chief danger arises where tribes are small or so broken up
that not more than one or two families recognize a chief.

486 There is, however, one recognized exception to this sanctity of
721 diras, namely, the right of every tribe, or even section of a tribe, to
577 raid any other according to a well-established code of warfare, unless
621 barred by definite federation, treaty, or ancient friendship. To go
out on raid (*ghazwa*) is the young man's chance of proving himself,
and to provide him with that opportunity is virtually obligatory on
all tribes, except the meanest. The greater chiefs, like their ancient
cousins, the Assyrian kings, make an annual practice of the Raid.
The farther afield it goes, the greater the glory in a society punctili-
ously sensitive to public opinion. Raiding parties may, therefore,
be met very far from the ranges of their own people, and no district
is quite safe from them. They may generally be recognized by their
travelling light, without women, and on high-bred camels. The *rafiq*
is powerless against them in his own dira, except possibly through
some lucky friendship on his part or the repute of his tribe. But
raiding parties are not very particular. They will swoop down on
a caravan without asking many questions or being much disposed
to respect persons. Unless the traveller's party is very decidedly
stronger than the attack, it should submit at once. Most of its
belongings will be taken, but no life. Such submission is a well-
recognized part of the game, and entails no slur on the courage of
any members of the party.

486 The more the traveller can learn and retain in his mind of the
181 genealogy of individuals and tribes, in a land where pedigrees are very
574 widely known back to a hoar antiquity and inordinately valued,
the better for his safety and the impression he will make and leave
on his hosts. He should know also, as far as possible, the political
grouping of tribes and recent desert history. If, like Doughty, he